



Standard Right-to-Know Law Request Form

Good communication is vital in the RTKL process. Complete this form thoroughly and retain a copy; it may be required if an appeal is filed. You have 15 business days to appeal after a request is denied or deemed denied.

SUBMITTED TO AGENCY NAME: CITY OF CHESTER (Attn: AORO)

Date of Request: AUG 24 2023 Submitted via: X Email U.S. Mail Fax In Person

PERSON MAKING REQUEST:

Name: REP JOHN LAWRENCE Company (if applicable): PA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mailing Address: 1 COMMERCE BLVD STE 200

City: WEST GROVE State: PA Zip: 19390 Email: JLAWRENCE@PAHOUSEGOP.COM

Telephone: 610-869-1602 Fax:

How do you prefer to be contacted if the agency has questions? Telephone X Email U.S. Mail

RECORDS REQUESTED: Be clear and concise. Provide as much specific detail as possible, ideally including subject matter, time frame, and type of record or party names. RTKL requests should seek records, not ask questions. Requesters are not required to explain why the records are sought or the intended use of the records unless otherwise required by law. Use additional pages if necessary.

COPIES OF THE "TWO CREDIBLE PLANS" PROVIDED BY CHESTER MAYOR KIRKLAND TO RECEIVER MICHAEL DOWEARY AS REFERENCED IN THE APRIL 17 2023 DVJOURNAL ARTICLE ENTITLED "RECEIVER: CHESTER'S DIRE FINANCIAL STRAITS MAY LEAD TO DISONCORPRATION."

DO YOU WANT COPIES? Yes, printed copies (default if none are checked) X Yes, electronic copies preferred if available No, in-person inspection of records preferred (may request copies later)

Do you want certified copies? Yes (may be subject to additional costs) No RTKL requests may require payment or prepayment of fees. See the Official RTKL Fee Schedule for more details. Please notify me if fees associated with this request will be more than X \$100 (or) \$

ITEMS BELOW THIS LINE FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

Tracking: Date Received: Response Due (5 bus. days):

30-Day Ext.? Yes No (If Yes, Final Due Date:) Actual Response Date:

Request was: Granted Partially Granted & Denied Denied Cost to Requester: \$

Appropriate third parties notified and given an opportunity to object to the release of requested records.

Receiver: Chester's Dire Financial Straits May Lead to Disincorporation



Posted to [Politics](#) April 17, 2023 by [Linda Stein](#)

The official charged with overseeing the City of Chester's dismal finances is predicting the city might reach the point where it will be disincorporated or dissolved.

Michael Doweary, the receiver appointed three years ago by former Gov. Tom Wolf to help pull the cash-strapped municipality out of insolvency, blamed elected city officials who filed appeals to block a bankruptcy and who also appealed court-approved modifications to the receiver's plans.

Chester needs a plan by the end of 2023, or it will cease to exist as a municipality, Doweary said.

Vijay Kapoor, Doweary's chief of staff, called the situation "sobering."

"Chester is really running out of time," Kapoor said. "There needs to be a focus right now on solving Chester's problems. If a comprehensive solution is not found by the end of the year, there may be no alternative for Chester but disincorporation."

If that were to happen, all municipal employees would be fired while the city's elected officials would be dismissed. A state administrator would then oversee the municipality as a disenfranchised territory.

Kapoor claimed that if a bankruptcy lawyer had not brokered a bargain with bondholders, the city would be out of money by this September.

The city's newly completed 2019 audit showed a \$6.8 million loss and a negative \$27.7 million fund balance. Also, the city has not made \$40 million in payments to its pension fund.

Kapoor said Chester would need a \$5 million loan in January to make its payroll.

And in 2025, Chester faces "a significant fiscal cliff," said Doweary.

"If you're out of money, you can't keep the lights on. Chester's financial situation is critical, and it is running out of time to find a solution," he said.

When Kapoor said city officials had not devised their own plan, Mayor Thaddeus Kirkland objected.

“We provided the Receiver with two credible plans,” said Kirkland. Both involved deals with the Chester Water Authority (CWA), including selling it to Aqua PA.

“Offers to monetize (that asset) are not a comprehensive plan,” Doweary countered. “Those were just offers for the system, not a plan.

“Bankruptcy is the only thing to bring all of the creditors to the table.”

Elected officials have been unwilling to cut back on pensions, one of the biggest items of bloat in the city budget. Kirkland said one former employee, whose husband died, told him: “How am I going to make it if you cut my pension?”

CWA lawyer Frank Catania said CWA is the only entity that has offered to help Chester, proposing in 2019 to give the city \$60 million in exchange for dropping any efforts to take over or sell the authority.

“It’s not a solution to sell (CWA) to Aqua,” he said of the city’s current fiscal crisis. Doing that “shifts the burden from Chester to the ratepayers.”

“The city (Chester) is in a bad spot (financially),” Catania said. He asked why the state has not given Chester a deal like those it gave to Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh, which have also run into financial difficulties over the years.

Last year, the legislature and Wolf approved an extension of the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority’s oversight of Philadelphia until 2047.

“The state has overseen Chester for more than 25 years,” said Catania. “I think they have an obligation to help it, and rather than offer to help, they let the problem get much, much worse.

“It’s hard to conclude anything other than it was done on purpose.”

Catania also cited recent remarks by Philadelphia mayoral candidate Jeff Brown, saying many people in state government share his attitude.

A spokesperson for Gov. Josh Shapiro did not respond when asked about state help for Chester.

The state Supreme Court has agreed to hear appeals on the Chester cases. In the meantime, said Kapoor, elected officials have resumed their control of various city departments after a Commonwealth Court judge had ousted them.

In that ruling, Judge Ellen Ceisler blasted city officials for nepotism and self-dealing.

Also, federal grant programs that came online due to COVID are ending, so Chester may have to lay off some 20 people in January.

“We need to have a plan in place by the end of the year,” said Doweary.

About the Author



Linda Stein

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